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You Gotta Go to School for That?

by **Jerry Seay** (Rookie Librarian, College of Charleston Libraries)



It is amazing, but I still run into people who find it difficult to believe that working at a library is exciting. Despite all my revelations of fantastic adventures in and around the stacks, some folks just do not believe. They actually believe that library work is just paper shuffling and book shelving. Imagine! What a bore that would be!

Why, just the other day I experienced what could only be called "the great Mercedes and donuts adventure." It is hardly a tale that could happen to anyone else but librarians. It all started when I stumbled into Katina's office (that's the only way one can enter Katina's office) to ask her a pressing question concerning some great socio-economic event of the day. I don't remember what it was now.

Katina looked up from her desk and beamed that happy smile she usually greets folks with who successfully maneuver their way through her office to her desk. But, she was not fooling me. I sensed a problem right off. I think it had something to do with the way the ten or twelve pieces of paper were wafting about her head as if she had just thrown them in the air and the more than usual number of pencils sticking out of her hair.

"Problem?" I ventured. I almost wondered if she might throw me in the air next.

"Nah," said she. "Just looking for something and I forgot what I was looking for. I hate it when that happens."

She turned to dig into another pile of papers. If Katina is anything, she is persistent. "You going to that CD-ROM workshop at the Citadel?"

Having completely forgotten about this workshop, I answered decisively. "Uh, well, yea, I guess so."

She suddenly started frantically scooping up papers around her. "It starts in thirty minutes. I'm leaving now. Want a ride?" Katina was now rushing past me leaving a trail of blowing papers in her wake.

"Uh, well, yea, I guess so."

Katina is hard to keep up with even under normal conditions. But, when she is on a mission it becomes difficult to keep her in focus. I just managed to

jump on the elevator before the doors closed.

"We're supplying the treats for the workshop," said Katina. "I have to stop at the bakery on the way and pick up donuts. You don't mind, do you?"

"What? Me miss out on a baked goods adventure?"

So there we were driving through downtown Charleston in Katina's Mercedes. Not having much occasion to ride in a Mercedes I just sat for awhile taking it all in. Then I discovered a book about Madonna in the back seat.

"Oh, that's something I'm supposed to find a reviewer for," said Katina as we careened down a back alley. "Do you want to review it?"

Katina is always looking out for my professional development. I flipped through a few pages. "Nah," I said. "No pictures."

"Guess you're right," she shrugged and then braked to a stop.

Suddenly we were there: smack dab in front of Ye Olde Towne Bakerye (they like "e"s here in Charleston). And not a parking place in sight.

"Want me to run in," I offered.

"No," said Katina looking at her watch. "They don't know you and I've got to sign for the donuts."

She's right, of course, I thought. They'd probably gun me down as soon as I stepped in the door. Those bakers take their donuts seriously.

Katina ended up leaving me in the car and running into the bakery for "just a minute." The looks people were giving me as they drove around the idling Mercedes convinced me that the middle of the road was an ungood place to park. Not wanting to negotiate the narrow streets of Charleston in someone else's Mercedes, I secured a vacated parking place as a delivery truck pulled out. I decided that the sign that read "FOR DELIVERY ONLY" could also be construed to mean "FOR FOLKS WAITING FOR OTHER FOLKS TO PICK THINGS UP AND YOU DON'T HAVE ANYWHERE ELSE TO WAIT." At least that is what I intended to tell the first cop that happened by.

What really concerned me was the possibility of some guy named Vinnie pulling up beside me in a giant beer truck and saying something like, "Hey,

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buddy, whatsamatter you? Ya got cauliflower fer brains or what? Better move outta my space before I mash you into da curb." I turned the flashers on so no one would "mash" me by accident.

Katina emerged about sixteen minutes latter. Meanwhile, I had managed to reprogram her radio to every acid rock station in town — unintentionally. Those Mercedes radios have buttons that the untrained should just not touch.

"Sorry for the wait," said Katina jumping in the car. "I had to wait for them to finish baking the donuts."

before reaching their final destination.

Preliminary analysis of a time/cost study [See Morris, Dily E. *Technical Services Time and Cost Study*, Iowa State University, Ames, IA, (April 1987-April 1992).] conducted over the last six years reveals a significant savings in administration and manual tasks performed. After reviewing surveys of various technical services arrangements in ARL libraries, it has become evident that there is no one way to organize the acquisitions functions within a library. Several options remain under investigation, and we continue to take the attitude that our next reorganization will not be our last. ☞

The things we won't do for our profession.

We did finally make it to our workshop. Of course no one was in the mood for donuts that day. Oh, the sacrifices that go unsung. In good College of Charleston tradition I dutifully gathered the uneaten donuts in one accord and brought them back to the College for redistribution to a staff who appreciates a good donut.

I'm sure there is a moral in there somewhere. In any case this clearly shows that — once again — in the library world the living is fast, the donuts are fresh, and the adventure never ceases. ☞

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